

GUIDELINE B-4
(formerly 15-05)

Snow Disposal and De-icing Operations in Ontario

Legislative Authority:

*Ontario Water Resources Act, RSO 1990, Section 30
Environmental Protection Act, RSO 1990, Section 6
Environmental Assessment Act, RSO 1990, Section 5*

Responsible Director:

Director, Program Development Branch

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Table of Contents

1.0 SNOW DISPOSAL GUIDELINES

- 1.1 Snow Removal
- 1.2 Snow Disposal
- 1.3 Ministry Approval for Direct Disposal
- 1.4 Evaluation of Snow Disposal Sites

2.0 DE-ICING OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

3.0 DE-ICING CHEMICAL STORAGE

4.0 *THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT*

SYNOPSIS

The purpose of this guideline is to minimize the environmental impact of snow collection and disposal practices and de-icing operations. Guidance is provided to staff of the Ministry and road maintenance agencies.

Detailed information on the guidelines is contained in Procedure B-4-1: "Procedures for Snow Disposal and De-icing Operations in Ontario (1975)".

1.0 Snow Disposal Guidelines

1.1 Snow Removal

Snow removal operations shall be carried out as follows:

- (a) snow from heavily travelled roadways shall be removed as quickly as possible following a storm; and
- (b) efforts shall be made to minimize the chances of picking up refuse as part of the snow removal operations.

1.2 Snow Disposal

Direct disposal of snow to watercourses or ice-covered lakes and rivers shall be eliminated wherever possible. Disposal on properly selected land sites, based on the criteria outlined in 1.4, is considered, in most cases, the best solution.

1.3 Ministry Approval for Direct Disposal

If special circumstances preclude the disposal of snow on land sites or by other satisfactory means, Ministry approval from the Region is required prior to dumping directly to a watercourse.

1.4 Evaluation of Snow Disposal Sites

A number of criteria are used to evaluate the relative suitability of disposal sites. They are:

- (a) accessibility;
- (b) noise;
- (c) alternative and future uses of the site;
- (d) visual considerations;
- (e) surface and sub-surface drainage;
- (f) previous uses of the site;
- (g) stability of the soils; and
- (h) public safety;
- (i) impact on neighbouring drinking water wells.

2.0 De-icing Operational Guidelines

The Ministry encourages the sensible and conservative use of sodium chloride and other de-icing compounds and recommends the following operational guidelines to be used by road maintenance agencies:

- (a) reduce de-icing chemical application rates to the minimum amount necessary to successfully perform the job;
- (b) employ rate-controlled distribution equipment which applies the de-icing chemical at the proper rate, regardless of the vehicle's speed;
- (c) apply de-icing chemicals on main thoroughfares and critical sections of roadways only;
- (d) where salt/sand mixtures are applied, incorporate into the admixture only enough salt to achieve the desired results; and
- (e) consider special protective measures when de-icing chemicals are applied to places in proximity to very salt-sensitive areas (e.g., orchards, parks).

3.0 De-icing Chemical Storage

De-icing chemicals or sand/salt stockpiles shall always be protected from precipitation or surface runoff. The Ministry recommends that permanent storage structures be installed wherever possible.

4.0 The *Environmental Assessment Act*

Where an activity covered by this guideline is an undertaking under the *Environmental Assessment Act*, it shall not proceed except in compliance with that *Act*.